



NATIONAL SECURITY TIME FOR MEXICO?

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In the so-called Fourth Transformation, national security has undergone through a process of minimization and devaluation. Since 2019, Mexico has lacked a National Security Program, and despite legislative majorities and significant constitutional changes in the last administration, neither the ineffective National Security Law has been modified, nor has the national security system been adapted to current needs.

The brief 15-day tenure of President Donald Trump should serve as a wake-up call to reassess and reevaluate the vision and instruments of national security. In this short period, Mexico's national security has been undermined, as the U.S. has proposed changes to strategic issues affecting the nation. The first actions have already altered the situation of Mexican migrants in the U.S., initiated the process of reclassifying criminal organizations as terrorist groups, negotiated tariff increases on Mexican products, and begun to suggest that the Mexican government sponsors criminal or terrorist activities.

From a national security perspective, with well-calibrated systems, alarms should have been triggered as soon as these issues emerged during the U.S. electoral campaign, and the planning to prevent uncertainty and damage in the scenario of a Trump presidency should have started since then. This does not appear to have happened. Everything indicates that the national security perspective was disregarded and that commercial matters, violence, addiction issues, and border controls lack the necessary diagnoses, plans, and strategies that would give the President of Mexico an advantage in negotiations and in dealing with President Trump's unique way of operating.

So far, despite the pause in tariffs, instability remains, as the migrant expulsion campaign continues, and the process of reclassifying criminal organizations as terrorists is still underway. In this context, within a month, we could be discussing the suspension of tariff increases, the deportation of migrants, and the reclassification process, or we could be facing a humanitarian crisis due to mass deportations, the launch of a military campaign against "Mexican terrorism," and tariffs exceeding 25%.

In less than a month, we will see whether the agreements made in the phone call between President



Sheinbaum and Trump are sufficient. In the meantime, the country should be working on updating its national security system. If we were being cautious, the Legal Counsel of the Presidency should already be drafting a new National Security Law, the National Security Council should be in permanent session, and intelligence systems should be assessing their roles and redesigning their operations to address national and public security challenges.

The country needs its national security system to build scenarios based on the new realities that will emerge from the agreements between President Sheinbaum and Trump and the work of the binational cooperation groups that will be formed. From a national security perspective, we must understand Mexico's role in the construction of Trump's political project, Make America Great Again (MAGA), the discrepancies and similarities it has with the Fourth Transformation, and stop doubting that our greatest vulnerability is organized crime and the insecurity it generates within our country and exports to the rest of the world.

Due to its geopolitical location, Mexico should allocate resources to the constant updating of its national security system; however, politicians have failed to understand this and have gradually undermined it. Public and citizen security issues seemed to be the final nail in the coffin for the national security system, which slowly aligned itself with police paradigms. Now, in the face of a different geopolitical reality and despite political resistance, it is necessary to revalue, leverage, and expand it to better confront the challenges and threats that jeopardize national development.

This past weekend provided a paradigm example of the need to reassess the national security vision. Fentanyl, an issue previously considered a minor challenge for public or citizen security due to its limited economic, violent, and addiction-related impact in Mexico, has become a national security problem by threatening the bilateral relationship, the country's stability, and economic

Strategic recommendation

Given the challenge posed by President Trump's policies, the Mexican government must make an extraordinary effort to ensure that national development and viability are not threatened by external measures. To achieve this, it would be advisable to update and utilize a 21st-century national security system that aligns with current realities and challenges. Decision-makers must acknowledge the limitations of the police paradigm in addressing crime and violence in today's context and, in doing so, revalue a national security approach.



growth—and, therefore, its development. Had this issue been understood earlier from a geopolitical, bilateral, and national and international policy perspective, national security actions might have been implemented to prevent a criminal matter from turning into a threat to the country's development.

The Government of Mexico has 30 days to prevent or develop the tools to address a situation similar to what occurred this past weekend—one we hope will not be repeated. Undoubtedly, as President Sheinbaum has stated, we must continue working together, without subordination, between both countries to address security challenges. To do so, it is essential to elevate our national security system to a level where it can engage with its U.S. counterpart, understand that preventing future conflicts requires speaking the same language, and, most importantly, recognize that this is not merely a matter of crime.

Last call

Transparency and narrative will be key in the coming days to understand the implications of the agreements between President Sheinbaum and Trump. Tensions are high, and the threat of lethal force against criminal targets, military incursions into Mexican territory, and the use of private contractors or drones is causing significant uncertainty. Yesterday, for example, there was an attempt to understand the implications of a report about an alleged U.S. Air Force intelligence aircraft flying over the Sea of Cortez.

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